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THE INVALID.

A WREATH OF SMOKE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE perusal of the three remaining tales had been postponed for the evening. A rainy morning had been succeeded by a clear afternoon. The gentle-

men had departed for business, except Mr. Fane, who went out driving with Maria. Lilly filled up the hours with sight-seeing and shopping—the former for my benefit, the latter for that of the company in general; for a postponement of two

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days stamped a character of age on a portion of the wedding breakfast.

Dinner passed cheerfully enough, enlivened by many jokes; for Mr. Temple pretended to be very indignant at the hard cuts against his profession which had appeared in the tale of Lilly. We afterwards again formed our sociable circle round the drawing-room fire, to listen to the reading of "THE WREATH OF SMOKE."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Temple, addressing Dr. Vincent, as he took up rather a voluminous paper, "the title of this, 'THE INVALID,' suggests an idea that your subject is of rather a professional nature."

"We shall expect to hear," cried Lilly, "of some dreadful and extraordinary malady, discovered and cured in some wonderful way by a very judicious and talented physician, who lives somewhere between Portland Place and Wimpole Street."

Dr. Vincent gave his quiet little laugh. "The cure which I would suggest for my patient," he observed, "is not one which would put guineas into the pocket of a physician. As for the malady, it is so far from being extraordinary, that I have met many cases of it in my own practice. No solitary lady has sat for the portrait of my heroine; she rather appears as the type of a class affected, more or less, with the same complaint, which we frequently meet with in polite circles."

THE INVALID.

"HAVE our travellers never arrived yet?" exclaimed the squire, as he entered his lady's sitting-room, booted and spurred, after his afternoon ride. "I thought that I should have found your sister here."

"If I remember right, Anna mentioned five o'clock," replied Mrs. Sterndale, searching in her capacious pocket for her sister's letter. The article sought for in such receptacles constantly answers the description of Cowper:

"We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every corner—but the right."

So, spectacle-case, milliner's bill, thimble, bunch of keys, and case of sticking-plaster, all presumptuously forced themselves into notice before the missing letter was brought to light. Mrs. Sterndale opened it, and glanced over the contents. "Precious invalid! I fear that Devonshire has done little for her; my stay can be but a short one; I long to be in London again."

"I can't understand what took her out of it," said the squire.

"Oh! my love, her only daughter is in such a wretched state of health; it is feared that she is gradually sinking. Nothing but the hopes of saving her would have induced Anna to leave her husband, whom business ties to London. She is the most devoted of wives, as well as the most tender of mothers."

"What is the matter with Flora?" inquired the squire, his jovial countenance for a moment assuming a graver expression.

"That I cannot understand. My sister writes of depression, emaciation, want of appetite, etc."

"Hope they won't keep us waiting dinner; for want of appetite is a malady to which I, for one, am not subject."

"Nor depression, nor emaciation," added his wife, with a smile.

"Here they are!" cried little Neddy, rushing into the room, and flinging up his cap; "I saw the dusty carriage turning down the lane."

"Let us go to meet them," said Squire Sterndale; and in a few seconds he, with his wife and their little son, were standing in the portico to receive the travellers.

Mrs. Sylvester, who was the first to quit the carriage, affectionately returned the greeting of her sister, and then proceeded, with a countenance of anxious solicitude, to assist the movements of the invalid. Little Neddy wondered at the fur cloak and the numerous wrappings, which the warmth of the weather seemed to render more than superfluous; and he looked with some curiosity at the black lace veil, which concealed the features of his cousin.

"It's like the boxes of china which came yesterday," thought the child, "marked 'glass' and 'with care.' Cousin Flora moves as if she were afraid of being broken."

It was not until the ladies had entered the house that the veil and a respirator were removed, and the countenance appeared, rather pretty, but very pallid, of a lady of about thirty years of age. With the most anxious tenderness Mrs. Sylvester inquired how her beloved girl felt after her journey.

"I cannot bear the jolting," was the faint reply; "it makes me feel my side."

"You will go and rest, my sweet child," said the tender mother; "a little sleep will do you much good."

"A little dinner will do her much more," cried the squire.

Mrs. Sylvester shook her head sadly. "Alas! she has such a wretched appetite! she is wasted to a shadow!" And her gentle eyes filled with tears.

Ding dong, ding dong went the dinner-bell. A savoury odour found its way from the dining-room, still further to stimulate the appetite of the poor squire; but he was obliged to curb his impatience as well as he might, for the ladies had not yet descended into the boudoir; and he had opened and shut half the books on the table, walked backwards and forwards like a caged lion, and was finally engaged in jumping Neddy over the back of the sofa, when they at length made their appearance.

Miss Flora, who entered leaning on the arm of her aunt, glanced at the child, who was full of noisy mirth, with that kind of apprehension with which some maiden ladies are wont to regard little boys.

"This is my Ned," said the squire, chucking the child under the chin with a look of parental pride. "Are you fond of little people, Flora?"

"Very—when they are quiet. I can't bear much noise; it makes me feel my head."

"Now let's come to dinner," said Mr. Sterndale, offering his arm to Mrs. Sylvester. "I am glad that you have had so fine a day for your journey. Perhaps you will fancy a walk in the evening; sunset, over our hills, is a sight worth seeing. What say you to a promenade, Flora?"

"Oh! I never can walk; it is impossible; it makes me feel my back."

"She is all feeling," thought Neddy, who was

perched up by his father at the table. "It must be very troublesome to her; I never feel anything but hungry."

Mrs. Sylvester seemed little inclined to do justice to the good fare provided—she was anxiously watching her daughter.

"A chop, or a slice of our English roast beef, Flora?" said the squire, suspending over the dish the carving-knife and fork with which he was armed.

"Oh! thank you, neither; I can't eat."

"Not eat!" exclaimed the squire.

"After your long journey," suggested his wife.

"Only a little," entreated the mother.

"I cannot take anything, indeed."

"But you know that nourishment was ordered for you, my darling. If only a morsel——"

"I cannot touch it," and Flora helped herself languidly to a little piece of cauliflower. Her mother sighed heavily, and pushed her own plate aside.

Flora retired early to rest, worn out by fatigue and fasting. The squire had business to talk over with his steward, and the two sisters were left alone.

"Mary, what do you think of my Flora?" said Mrs. Sylvester, as soon as he had quitted the room; and the poor mother looked as though she dreaded a reply to her question. "Is she not fearfully altered?"

"You know that it is several years since I last saw her."

"But has she not grown dreadfully thin and pale? It breaks my heart to see her."

"She certainly looks delicate; but how could it be otherwise, when she takes neither exercise nor food? Have you consulted any medical man?"

"Oh! the three first physicians in London; but it is of no use, they cannot help me. She can never be persuaded to try what they prescribe, or to obey what they order. In despair, I tried what travelling could do. I left home at great inconvenience; I had never been separated before from my dear husband for any length of time, and he has not been well; but our only child was dying, and——" the poor lady was too much overcome to proceed.

"I believe," said Mrs. Sterndale, thoughtfully, "I suspect, that it would have been a blessing to Flora, if——" she paused.

"Oh! tell me; I would do anything," cried Mrs. Sylvester.

"If she had had to work for her bread," replied her sister, gravely. "The sure way to lose our health, is to make it too much the subject of our thoughts."

"Then you do not consider my dear girl dangerously ill?"

"I have not yet seen enough of her to form an opinion; yet I imagine that if we could but persuade her to exert herself a little——"

"But she is so helpless, so weak, so low!"

"Perhaps her mind feeds upon itself: could we teach her to look farther, to think of you and of her father——"

"Oh! Mary, she is the most affectionate of daughters."

Mrs. Sterndale was silent; she looked at the wan countenance of her sister, and thought it

best to close the conversation, resolving in her own mind to watch more closely the case of poor Flora, and to try such remedies as reason and affection might suggest.

As might be expected, the invalid was not seen at the breakfast table the next morning; she was far too much fatigued to rise early. The day was well advanced before she entered the sitting-room with slow and languid step, and took her place upon the sofa.

Neddy, who was engaged upon the floor with a giant set of nine-pins, jumped up to welcome her with a heartiness from which she shrank like a sensitive plant.

"Cousin Flora, I've been waiting all the morning to go out with you. I want to show you our Cheddar cliffs, and the cave in the rock. Oh! it's such a famous place for climbing."

"I cannot climb, dear."

"Oh, I never thought of your climbing, but you shall look at me. Now, just go and put on your bonnet, and we'll have such a beautiful walk."

"I can't walk," sighed Flora.

The boy looked steadily into her face. "Can you ride, then?" said he; "we have such a nice gentle donkey."

"I can't ride," replied the lady, with a look of weariness.

"What *can* you do?" asked the child. It was a puzzling question, and received no reply. Neddy made one more effort to amuse the unamusable guest. "Will you have a game at nine-pins with me?"

"I can't play at nine-pins, Neddy."

An arch smile dimpled the cheek of the child.

"When I don't choose to do what I am asked, I say one word, and when you don't choose to do what you are asked, you say another; but I think that they mean just the same. You say '*I can't*,' and I say '*I won't*!'"

"Neddy, Neddy!" cried his mother, "that is a very rude speech to your cousin."

"Was it rude? I did not mean to be rude," said the child, looking up into Flora's face, and reading there a confirmation of his mother's words. "I will go and gather some flowers for you to make up, cousin Flora; you can look at them, you know, if you are ever so much tired," and he ran quickly out of the room.

Neddy soon returned with his little hands full of flowers, which he laid on the knee of the invalid. "I have brought you roses and lilies," said he; "they look so pretty together. Do you not like that rose, cousin Flora?"

"It is almost as round and as red as my little boy's cheeks," said Mrs. Sterndale, putting back the clustering locks from the brow of her child, and pressing a fond kiss upon it. "I wish that we saw roses on the cheeks of your dear cousin, but she rather resembles the lilies."

"I do not think Flora at all like the lilies," said Neddy, glancing thoughtfully from the flowers to his cousin. "The lilies look so upright and firm, just as though they were queens. I know something much more like my cousin; I'll show you what it is." He darted out of the room, and quickly re-appeared, trailing a long straggling tress of bind-weed.

"Fie, Neddy! fie!" cried his mother; "to compare your cousin to such a thing!"

"I think it is very pretty, mamma; it has nice white flowers, and such green leaves!"

"But it is a weed, my boy; it trails over the sweet strawberries and chokes them; it destroys plants more valuable than itself. It is worse than useless."

"Cousin Flora is crying," whispered the astonished child to his mother; "have I said something rude again?"

"Run away, my love, and amuse yourself; she is not feeling very well; she will be better by and bye. Take away the bind-weed with you, Neddy."

That day passed, and the next, but they were only marked by deepening depression and increasing weakness on the part of the unhappy invalid, who opposed to maternal entreaties and hospitable solicitations a quiet but unyielding firmness, which it appeared that nothing could move.

"If she were my girl," said the squire, in a *tête-à-tête* with his wife, "I would make her do what is for her good."

"I am thankful enough that she is not my daughter!" replied Mrs. Sterndale.

"What is her illness?"

"One more of the mind than of the body, I should think."

"I am glad that she leaves us to-morrow; it spoils one's appetite to look at her. Depend upon it, her slender waist is the real cause of it all; she will not eat lest she should cease to resemble a wasp."

"She has, perhaps, some secret sorrow, or she has met with some disappointment."

"Disappointment!" exclaimed the squire, slapping his knee; "oh! that is all romantic nonsense. She finds herself on the wrong side of thirty, and, as she can no longer be interesting from a pretty face, she thinks the next best thing is to have a sickly one."

"My poor sister! it is for her that I feel. She is so wrapt up in her daughter; and Flora is really an amiable girl, I believe. I rather think of trying an appeal to my niece's better feelings; that might have some effect."

"Bring clouds and rain," replied the squire, laughing. "If talking would do any good, she has had enough of that already, I am sure; I would try a sharper remedy; but do as you like, my dear; I know by experience your skill in that line; talk her into a two miles walk, or an appetite, or a good hearty laugh, if you can."

A HAPPY PARISH.

It was through the gloom of a December morning that I undertook a visit to that happy parish, a description of which is attempted in this paper. The individual whom I went to see is a man whose hours spared from the desk are devoted to action—who lays down the pen only to put in practice the maxims he has been drawing for the guidance of others. Member of a noble profession—the most privileged, and at the same time the most responsible that man can aspire to—it is his aim to reconcile the ideality of religion with the harsh reality of our daily life. Showing by his example

that the sterner Christian virtues are not incompatible with a cheerful and keen enjoyment of earthly existence, he teaches those around him from no elevated position, but, as one of themselves, warns and advises, and, "preaching the gospel rather than the law, draws down to them the golden chain that unites earth to heaven."

All this I knew full well from general report, and from the friend who shared my journey, although at that time I had no idea that I should carry home with me such pleasant recollections of that December morning. When we rumbled through a watersplash, red and turbid with the winter's floods, I did not know that we had entered upon charmed ground, and that the swollen rivulet separated from the rest of the world "a happy parish." I was not more likely to expect this from the fact that we were journeying through the midst of one of England's agricultural counties. All the world must be well enough aware of their moral and intellectual condition. Mountains of parliamentary blue-books groan with dismal evidence of their poverty, ignorance, and crime; ten years ago blazing stackyards and homesteads fiercely told this tale, and now thickly-peopled gaols and workhouses more silently, yet not less clearly, shadow it out. Dark ignorance, the fruitful parent of every crime, sits brooding over the land, which is deaf and blind to the monsters it fosters.

If the reader of this simple narrative should deem it dull or uninteresting, I beg of him to draw upon his memory for some of those pictures of rural life with which the press of this country has teemed for many years, and compare them with the following sketch of a happy parish. That it may be open to a charge of dulness is likely enough, for it is simply my impressions of a wintry afternoon's stroll through Oakfield—so we will term the favoured spot—not one whit coloured or added to.

Here is a sketch of Oakfield as the traveller sees it, in a few brief touches. A gently undulating country, dotted thickly with clusters of trees, sheltering trim farm-houses in the midst of well-cultivated fields; a fine old church, with a pretty rectory adjacent, placed in a corner of a noble park, in which, guarded by grand old trees, stands a square substantial Tudor Hall. A wide moat, still filled with water and resorted to by wild-fowl surrounds it, and the drawbridge yet remains in use, to remind us of an architectural interregnum between the feudal stronghold and the Elizabethan pleasure-house, when society was beginning to feel secure, but men still retained memories of the rival Roses, and some yet lived who had fought on Bosworth Field. The park is a noble one, in which antlered deer and shaggy cattle browse, and ever and anon the haughty red stag darts across the vistas formed by the weatherbeaten ancient oaks, which score their age by centuries. They could tell strange tales of by-gone days—could these old trees—heirlooms in a proud family. They saw Edmund Spenser's Gloriana amble past, in all the pomp of her stately progresses, and waved as hearty a welcome to the royal virgin as they had given her when, as the simple Princess Elizabeth, persecuted and almost friendless, she passed beneath their rustling

branches. Gloriana paid several visits to Oakfield, both as princess and queen, and the old hall seems full even now of her presence. There are portraits of her in almost every room; her bust is conspicuous on oak cabinets and carved chimney-pieces innumerable. They show you the couch on which she rested her weary limbs, beside the roaring wood fire which was blazing on the huge hearth when we saw the hall, as it had done three hundred years ago, throwing the same warmish light on oak floor and painted window, on gleaming suits of armour and dull family portraits. They take you to the very bed on which her royal person reposed; and a handsome substantial four-poster it is, very superior in design and utility to the tawdry tapestried pieces of bad taste which are preserved at Hampton Court and elsewhere, as specimens of the domestic architecture of that Augustan era, on which Mr. Macaulay loves to dwell. They bring to you the very leathern black-jacks from which her precious health was drunk; and, indeed, the hall seems to have had one master memory which has, "like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the rest."

The church, too, is well worthy of notice, and demands a longer inspection than we can give it. Within its walls lie all the great ones from the hall, whose name was a household word in Oakfield before the Norman William played for and won England upon Hastings Field. The interior is crowded with figures of warriors reclining with crossed hands and sheathed swords; statesmen kneeling in their robes; plain country gentlemen, looking uncomfortably chilly in Roman costume; and beattified ladies undergoing apotheosis. Beneath them are inscriptions of every age and style, adulatory memorials in bad Latin, quaint acrostics and couplets, apostrophes to heathen goddesses, all agreeing in one respect, namely, how great and good the commemorated were, and how sure their heirs were that they all rested upon Abraham's bosom. What strange thoughts possess the mind as we gaze upon such a mausoleum. Were all the dead sleeping here good and pious? Did that soldier never use his sword in an unworthy cause, that statesman never sully his ermine, that priest never stain his lawn? Are we to believe this, or must we confess that fashion presided over their obsequies and carved their tombstones? The present owner of Oakfield Hall, whose forefathers rest in the handsome church, has much to do with the happiness of the parish I am now describing. He owns and knows by heart every inch of it. Upon inquiry, I found that it has been his object to prevent the collection of residents in any one spot, which would form that rural community styled a village. In a parish containing between four and five hundred inhabitants, I looked in vain for the usual cluster of damp cottages, environing a marshy green, with its stale ponds, in which the very geese and ducks seem to stagnate, and which are the characteristic features of the villages in the neighbourhood of Oakfield.

However pretty these village commons look from a distance, with the smoke curling up against the evening sky from the thatched houses, picturesquely moss-covered from damp, I preferred seeing blocks of cottages placed here and there

about the farms, with their pleasant orchards and strips of garden-ground attached. I love to see neighbours neighbourly; but I know how many good housewives are made careless and idle by one village gossip, and I have a horror of the common pump, where women cluster and scandalize their absent friends, while their children scald themselves or fall into the fire at home. I happen to know somewhat of the reality of that ideal village life, so charmingly sung of by poets, and painted by artists; and I conscientiously believe that the existence so celebrated has little, if any, of the innocent beauty popularly ascribed to it. I know much more (I am speaking now of my agricultural county) of village malevolence, evil speaking, and shamelessness, than I do of social intercourse and pure pleasure.

Again, it is difficult to estimate the amount of domestic misery ascribable to the village inn. The poor labourer has a hard task to make his week's earnings cover his own and his family's wants; and the sum, however small, absorbed by the landlord of the "Green Lion," is severely felt. A working man, who allows even one shilling weekly of his gains to find its way into the beershop-till, is as unwise as the professional man who, with a thousand a year, should spend one hundred on his wine bill; and what thoughtful family man would think of doing so? Now, in Oakfield, with its five hundred inhabitants, there is neither public-house nor beershop. Neither to be drunk off or on the premises, is beer licensed to be sold in this happy parish. Hodge may have his barrel of harvest ale in his own house, and may sociably drink it at his own fireside; but if he quarrels with his wife and wants his selfish draught elsewhere, he must walk some miles to enjoy it. So, knowing this, Hodge, of Oakfield, says "the soft word that turneth aside wrath," in time, and is happy.

In one corner of the parish is placed the village school. It has been built there in order that the two neighbouring parishes, which join Oakfield at this point, should share in its advantages. To see that school alone was well worth a winter day's journey. Instead of the plain square building which is generally reared to receive the children of the poor, we stood before a pretty, nay, even ornamental Tudor erection, with oak porches, peaked roof and gable ends, and projecting lattice windows. Fine playgrounds stretched away at the back, with swinging-poles and other appliances for gymnastic exercises, and the little rustic porch by which we entered was filled with the caps and satchels of the young scholars.

Within this building were collected all the children in Oakfield, and many from the adjacent parishes. One hundred and thirty pupils, of both sexes and of all ages, from four to fourteen, under the able direction of a professional master and mistress and six pupil teachers, were being trained for a proper discharge of the duties of life. Separated by a red cloth curtain from these, the children of the labouring classes, who are taught for the moderate sum of twopence weekly, I found a class of farmers' sons receiving a sterling English education for about four times that amount. It is very rare in England (at least in my experience) to find the classes so mingled as they are in the

parish school of Oakfield. Our schools generally range with the social classes into which we have divided ourselves, but the sight which the large and well-conducted school of this happy parish presented, was not altogether novel to me, who had seen many similar ones in Scotland. There all ranks and both sexes mix freely, study from the same books, are taught in the same classes, and compete for the same prizes. I have met in that country many accomplished men and women who were not unwilling to attribute much of their success in life to the care which, in common with many hundreds of weavers' and labourers' children, was bestowed upon their youthful culture by the parochial schoolmaster.

But this well-filled and well-conducted school was so novel a sight in that agricultural county, that I asked anxiously for an explanation of its success. Then I learned that the owner of Oakfield Hall and parish had laid it down as an inflexible rule, that every one of his tenants, high and low, should educate his children. With eyes fully open to the consequences of the ignorance that had long been allowed to rule undisturbed, he bravely determined to do battle with it, and, if possible, to banish it, with its long train of evil results, from the soil which had been intrusted to his stewardship. Arguing, wisely and kindly, that what the law heeded not, it was his individual duty to attend to, he built this handsome school, endowed sufficient teachers, and laid down the above well-meant rule. And so well have his wishes been complied with, and his labours appreciated, that, whereas in the rest of my agricultural county the average of education is not ten per cent. of the youthful population, in Oakfield not one per cent. is untaught. Nor this only; for so eager is the county for miles around, to take advantage of this school, that some neighbouring stables are filled with the ponies and donkeys of the distant pupils, and many of the villagers receive boys into their cottages, who are sent from a great distance to become scholars of the parish school of Oakfield.

Thus, while many successive Parliaments have discussed, amended, and finally rejected educational schemes, a plain country gentleman, in an out-of-the-way corner of an agricultural district, has instituted a system that must some day bear great fruits. And although I have seen many pleasant sights, I never witnessed a more pleasant one than that school on that well remembered December afternoon, when the snow lay white on hill and dale, and all was cold without, and sunny and cheerful within. And when the youngsters of the lower school struck up, as we left, some merry lays about woods, and birds, and nature's music, I carried over the threshold a store of pleasant thoughts and memories that have not entirely left me even after this lapse of time.

We had completed our walk through the parish, and were making the best haste we could over the thick, crisp snow to the rectory. Laughingly, I observed to our kind guide that the master of Oakfield Hall certainly laid himself open to the imputation of being a despot. It was admitted frankly. He would think no more of giving a hard-hearted, immoral tenant farmer notice to quit, than of sending an idle, irreclaimable labourer

into a more genial parish. But then he is a good landlord; and a better master never studied the interests of his working men. When prices were low, he took ten per cent. off his rents, and I wish I had space to narrate some of the schemes which, in conjunction with his clerical coadjutor, he has put into operation for the benefit of the poor. I came to the conclusion that it would be well for us all, and for my agricultural county in particular, if there were a few more despots wielding as powerful a sceptre, although I have as great a horror of tyranny as the veriest demagogue who has ever tried to level the social mountain he could not scale.

And I wish also that I had space to make more mention of the kind clergyman who has been our companion in this afternoon's stroll, and whose agency has been clearly visible in all the pleasant sights which we have seen. I must, however, record that I saw old and young brighten visibly at his greeting, and little children look happier as his kind smile lighted upon them; and that, marking how gracefully his profession of minister and pastor was worn, and how well the Christian gentleman shone in every word and action, Dryden's paraphrase of Chaucer's parish priest struck me forcibly, and that pleasant member of the famed pilgrim train seemed the prototype of him whose spiritual care has helped to make Oakfield the happy parish that it is.

ASCENT OF AN AFRICAN RIVER.

It was with no other purpose than that of shaking off the *vis inertia* acquired from a too familiar acquaintance with a genuine "bilious remittant," that I shipped myself and my African boy "Bill" for a sea airing on board an American brig that was lying in the harbour of Sierra Leone. The disorder itself had departed, but it had left me a prey to languor of body and listlessness and weariness of spirit. I wanted change—change of air, of scene, of subject, of contemplation—yes, and of stomach! I had no taste or appetite for anything on land, and so I took to the sea; and after a few days' sailing along the coast on a trial-diet of "salt-junk" and pea-soup, for the sake of change, I took to the land again. A small island, called Matacong, invited me on shore; and here, again, after a few hours, the merchant owner of a small vessel being about to proceed up one of the neighbouring rivers, he invited me on board. I was in too passive a mood to resist the last invitation till another should supersede it, and nothing better, on the score of novelty, was likely to offer. Accordingly, accompanied by a friend, whom he had also enlisted in the excursion, we quitted the island about ten o'clock in the forenoon; but the light variable airs, which merely coquetted with the flapping sails, soon subsided into a dead calm, and left us, for some time, to the enjoyment of a glowing heat, a clear pure atmosphere, and our own joint stock of small talk.

At length, however, a breeze sprung up fresh off the land, and although in opposition to our true course, we had the benefit of a flood tide to counteract its influence; so that with the skilful manipulation of our black crew, and that marvellous faculty which the cutter possessed of "sailing in

the wind's eye," we managed to reach the mouth of the Mellicourie as the sun was about setting. Here we anchored for the night, in one of the numerous channels which intersect an extensive bed of sand that stretches about five miles across the extreme limits of the river's confluence with the ocean. The land on either side is but slightly elevated above the high-water mark, and both banks present to the eye a range of forest which effectually screens from the view all traces of cultivation, inequalities of surface, or signs of habitations that may be beyond it. One small canoe was alone seen gliding along the southern shore to give a vague sense of animation to the surrounding solitude; and by the time our sails were lowered and stowed away, the ropes adjusted, and all "made snug for the night," the forested fringes of the quiet river became obscured; the prominent features of the land had faded into a faint grey tone, and the configuration of its general outline was scarcely perceptible, stretching into the sea on either side of us till lost in the mist of distance. All that was left of the vanished day was a long fiery bar of red light, which still lingered above the western horizon; and here, too, the young moon—too feeble, as yet, to keep late hours—was drowsily retiring. But the stars had begun to twinkle in succession, as if coming forth from the background of space to take their places in the dark blue firmament above us; and by the time the last vestiges of the brief twilight had dispersed,

"the radiant host

In thick profusion pour'd; shone out immense,
Each casting vivid influence on each,"

and sprinkling light upon the world below. It was a lovely night. The rippling waters around us danced to the silent breathings of the soft creeping wind that came off the land, and gambolled into pirouettes and gallops with the gurgling tide.

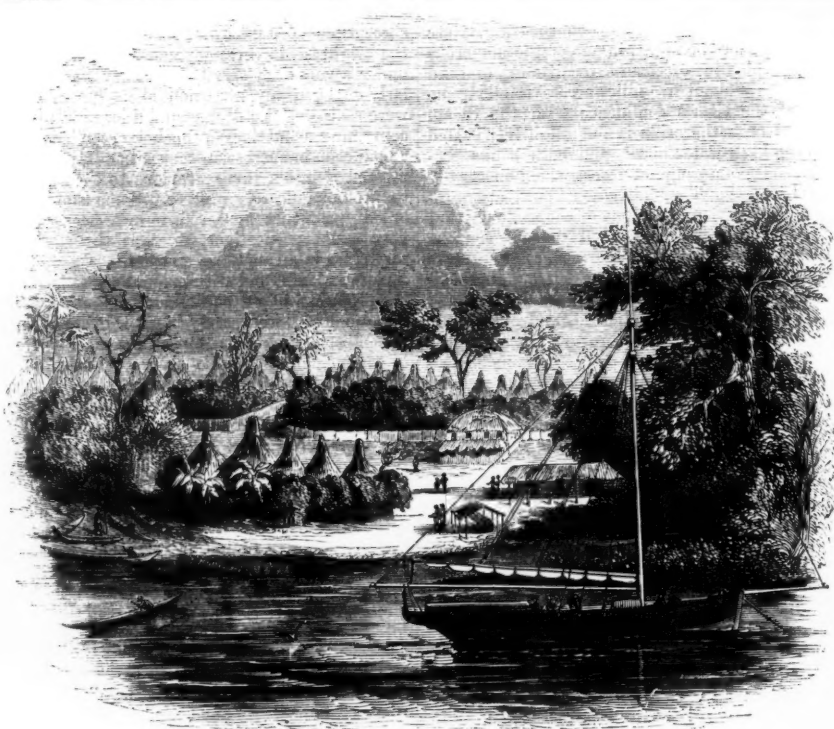
Our little crew was composed of about half a dozen of the Barga tribe, including the captain, who had picked up sufficient English to bewilder himself in the use of it. He had renounced the *j*, as unworthy of a place in the alphabet, from its pronunciation being quite as impracticable as the *th*; and, having acquired or assumed the title of "Captain Jack," he was as fastidious as some gentlemen of more social consideration whom we have known, in maintaining the euphony of his cognomen, by substituting a *Y* for the discarded consonant, and making it do double duty. In short, Captain Yack was a bit of a character. Although of a very simple and contemned tribe on the coast, his aspirations evidently aimed at proficiency and distinction as a "yack-tar." He wore his canvas trousers tight over his hips; his cheek shirt and neck-tie were quite ship-shape; a clasp knife with a becket hung round his neck; he had, moreover, taken to an occasional bit of "pigtail" as a "quid," or a substitute for it, in the more unsophisticated leaf; and he had evinced much discernment in the selection of a hat, which possessed the twofold characteristics of a "south-wester" and a "wide-awake."

The habits of his comrades were not materially inferior to his own, and they severally

afforded a gratifying instance of a rude tribe being susceptible of a polish, although not, perhaps, of the brightest, in the enjoyment of good treatment under a voluntary servitude. They had particularly engaged my attention about noon, as they were seated on the deck round a large iron boiler, containing about half a bushel of boiled rice, of which each in succession took a handful, and compressed it into a lump previous to committing it to the manducatory process. Some small pieces of salt pork, that appeared to have been cut into very equal proportions, were at the same time served up in a calabash; and here again each took a piece in turn, and with evident consciousness of the propriety of an equitable distribution. They had, no doubt, invited my boy "Bill" to become a "member of the mess;" but an alarming visitation in the region of the diaphragm, on this his first nautical adventure, had consigned him to a place somewhere in the hold, that he might the better quiet his stomach by getting as near as possible to the centre of gravity.

The wind remaining unchanged during the night, detained us in the morning till the flood-tide had acquired sufficient strength and afforded sufficient water for a traverse course against it up the stream; and Captain Yack now evinced more skill in seamanship, and a greater familiarity with rocks and sandbanks, than with his Anglo-African dialect. He seemed determined to bring all his intellectual and bodily faculties into full play on the occasion; and, as he saw that I was an attentive and interested observer, he so contrived to mix his English with his "Barga"—which, by the way, is made up of at least three languages—as to enlighten myself as well as his comrades in giving his orders, and to impress us with a due sense of his acquirements, as well as of his zeal. In the meantime, the wind was inclined to be malicious, or, as Yack termed it, "too much saucy," by dodging the vessel's head on every tack, and necessitating that evolution so suddenly and so frequently to keep clear of shoals, that the weight of his responsibility was not less conspicuous than our risk, from his allowing the mainsail, now and then, to look after itself, while he was paying special attention to the "yib," and the "yib-sheet." At length, however, we passed into a fair channel: at the same moment the wind lulled as we narrowed the span of the river, when Yack, quite as suddenly, betrayed his satisfaction with a vigorous fling of his left leg, to denote that he was kicking the dangers behind him; and exclaiming, with a joyous chuckle, "All-a-right, my boy!" he indulged for a few moments in complacent meditation on the risks we had encountered and the triumph he had achieved.

By this time we had made some progress up the stream; we had passed the mouth of a tributary, called the "Tannah River," on our left, and opened the small village of Kareutlie, nestled on a sheltered bay, with an extensive range of palms in its vicinity; and on our right a rudely-constructed habitation and offices, with something of a semi-European aspect, had acquired the name of an "English factory," at a spot called Binti. The wind had now died away, and we were smoothly gliding up this beautiful stream, carried rather than impelled solely by the tide, and walled



TOWN OF MALAGNEAH, ON THE MELLICOURIE.

in on either side by continuous belts of mangroves, which lined the banks. The sudden transition from fresh winds and squalls and vociferous excitement, to the stillness of perfect calm and unbroken silence, was most striking and impressive; and its effects were soon felt by all on board. My two companions had already gone off into a dozey state of cogitative abstraction; the one who *never* smoked, happy, probably, in a fit of musing which was leading him into the intricacies of commercial enterprise: and the other, who *always* smoked, mentally perched upon the white-ash pivot of a cigar, was framing wild fancies in his own clouds. The *Bargas*, too, had taken to their short pipes and were smoking; and the chimney of the caboose also began to smoke; and thus we glided onward, with the vast blue vault above us, the fervent heat of the mid-day sun upon us, with mangroves here and mangroves there, and the smooth glistening waters reflecting only the dense blue heaven, which seemed smiling upon the sabbath of Nature. Not a breath fanned the air; not a leaf stirred in the forest; not a sound disturbed the solemn stillness of the scene.

It is no marvel that such a scene, beautiful and striking as it was, began at length to act upon us soporifically. The *Bargas*, having nothing to do, except the man at the helm, were soon stretched upon the deck on the shady side of the foresail, where, also, I caught a perspective view of my boy "Bill" lying upon his back with his mouth wide open, like the gate of a fortress, and

his expansive nostrils representing a two gun battery for its protection. Captain Yack, whether asleep or awake, still maintained a standing posture, leaning over the topsides in the bow of the vessel, for the credit of "looking out ahead." My two companions had stealthily removed themselves "out of the sun" into the cabin, to snooze also; and even the man at the helm was at least "half-asleep." Still no canoes, no boats, no ships, nor wharves, nor houses, nor buildings of any kind; not even a stray monkey, an alligator, a hippopotamus, a bird, or a fish; only mangroves, and no men. And yet onward we went in silence, borne upon the waters instead of through them; and thus even our little boat that had been towing astern was gliding onward also, with the rope that attached it to the vessel relapsed into an indolent chain beneath the surface.

There was no resisting the epidemic. I became snoozey myself, and had fairly passed from that dreamy reverie, a "brown study," into a thorough fog of my own, when a stentorian explosion from Captain Yack roused me to full consciousness, at the same instant that a bottle of *limonade gazeuse* popped in the cabin.

Every man of the crew was on his legs in an instant, and all clustered round the captain. "Bill" was conspicuous in the rear of the group, from his performing the dance of St. Vitus in his eagerness to get to the front of it, and to have his interrogatories answered in any lingo that he could understand, as a substitute for the jabbering

in Barga. The two heads of the merchant and his friend appeared suddenly from below above the "companion," or cabin hatchway, like a couple of fishing floats returning to the surface after a running nibble; and, yielding to the impulse of curiosity, I hurried forward myself to get a glimpse of what was going on. Yack had, no doubt, been dozing, and had, on suddenly awaking, found the vessel near a spot much dreaded by negro navigators, and known by the term of "Devil's Island," it being popularly believed at certain seasons of the year to float down to the sea and back again.

If we attempt to discover the origin of this notion (which is by no means uncommon among different tribes) to any palpable evidence which may have sufficed to satisfy their credulity, it would be difficult to discover any other than the circumstance of small detached plots of land bearing bushes, and occasionally trees, being severed by the action of the tides, especially during the "freshes" in the rainy season, and which, floating down the stream till arrested by a shallow, are again carried up the stream on the return of the tide. They may thus be borne backwards and forwards for a length of time as the flood and ebb alternate, until finally they are carried down into the sea. Associating the features of these floating islands with some such stationary spots that are familiar to them, they may possibly imagine them to have returned to their places on afterwards discovering that they are still where they last saw them. It is a current idea among the natives in the neighbourhood of the Rio Pongas, that the "Devil's Island" in that river has really performed this freak quite as cleverly as the one in the Mellicourie.

In the mean time we were approaching the dreaded spot, and soon reached the narrow channel between it and the southern shore, where the greater depth of water to that of the main stream, as well as the structure of the island, clearly indicated that the combined action of the tides and currents had at some period effected a separation of the land, and, in the course of time, reduced the dismembered portion to the miserable looking islet in question. It is covered with straggling stunted trees, which rear their scanty foliage above a mass of scrubby underwood, and presenting, below the high-water mark, irregular strata of thin jutting horizontal layers of sandstone, having some resemblance to a decayed wall, and interlaced with fantastic ramifications of snake-like roots. As we glided past it, the sable countenances of the Bargas maintained their dark hue pretty well considering, and that of "Bill," the serenity of a "British subject;" his eyes certainly approached to the goggle; but, no doubt, a consciousness prevailed that the English flag was on duty as a conservative talisman, and, moreover, that a few muskets were on board. Still, the waistband of Captain Yack's trousers seemed a little too tight for the free escape of a long-drawn sigh, as he turned his back upon the domain of terror; and his comrades, at the same time, looked unutterable things at one another. It was evidently a great relief to them all when they were past it.

Proceeding onward, with the boat now accelerating our progress by towing ahead, we soon

passed, on our right, another tributary called the "Sammo River" which flows through the country bearing that name, and afterwards a small clearance on the same shore, and another through a gap in the mangroves appeared on the opposite bank, both having an odd-looking structure of mud walls with large thatched roofs; but there were no signs of inhabitants. They were, nevertheless, pretty little bits of the picturesque, with a florid and varied vegetation in their vicinity; and with the rude simplicity of the broken foreground and its patches of verdure, and the beaten tracks leading to and from the point of communication with the stream, afforded an agreeable contrast to the monotonous mangroves that lined the banks.

Hitherto, though our course had lain in a direction almost due east from the ocean, we had passed through a series of alternate bends of the stream, which had prevented any very extensive prospect. Now, however, we seemed to have stepped suddenly out of the wild irregular domain of nature into a scene which partook more of the grandest exertions of art. The river stretched away before us in a long, straight line. The mangroves on either side maintained a singular regularity in their growth and colour, forming in the lengthened vista, as far as the eye could reach, the semblance of a rectangular hall, or rather gallery, with pea-green walls or hangings, a pure azure ceiling, and a pavement of looking-glass reflecting upon its unbroken surface the gorgeous lineaments and proportions of the scene above it, and the glowing atmosphere which pervaded it. That truthful description of African rivers given by the poet Thomson here forcibly occurred to me:—

"With unabated force,

In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds;
Where the sun smiles, and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen and unenjoyed.
Thus pouring on, they proudly seek the deep."

We had advanced, however, but a short distance up this beautiful vista, to discover that we were now about leaving the waters of a tributary called the Moricania, or Tinany, which here forms a junction with the Mellicourie, whose course from the north-east was now opening to our view. We accordingly soon turned into a more tortuous course, and experienced a transitory relief, from a light breeze springing up as we twisted out of one reach into another; and the solitudes with which we had been familiar all day gave place to signs of life and animation. First we opened a small village on our right with canoes on the beach, and a few human forms; then a tenement and cleared patch on our left, with the odour of palm-oil and boiled rice tainting the atmosphere; there we passed a small creek; here we popped upon another, with a canoe stealthily gliding along the shore with a single occupier sculling it. Again, another gap in the mangroves, and another clearance; another puff, and another lull; and then—"Hi, hi—oh, oh! look dey, look dey!" "There is a monkey! look at the chaps; there he goes! There's another!" "Dere's t'oder one," vociferated Yack, "dere, dere, dere him go!" "Hi, hi, hi!" shouted the crew; "Hi, hi, hi!" returned the echoes; rustle, rustle, went the leaves; crack went the branches, and away scampered the grinning caricatures of hu-

manity, springing from tree to tree into the deep recesses of the mangrove forest. And away shot the cutter also, from the scene of their exploits, now with a light air, and now in a calm, now twisting in one direction, and now in another; till at length, having measured about twelve miles from the junction as the tide was about turning, we opened a small bay on our left, a different order of vegetation in its vicinity; then some rudely constructed buildings, a few unoccupied canoes, and at last the town of Malagneah, with a few houses near the beach, which looked like large beehives partially obscured by trees and underwood, opened fully upon the view. Here we dropped anchor, about sixteen miles below the head of the river and the town of Mellicourie, to which it owes its name.

PROVERBS.

THIRD PART.

THERE are few words more really ambiguous than that very common one, a "gentleman." "There's a gentleman!" says a not very practised observer, as a young man walks swelling down the pavement, got up regardless of expense: his moustache and his imperial trimmed in the last style of fashion; his back hair parted with faultless accuracy; his coat of the latest cut; a magnificent albert dangling from his waistcoat; and everything else in keeping. He a gentleman! If that be all, he is just the gentleman that his tailor, his perfumer, and his jeweller have made him. "Quite the gentleman," simpers a young lady, the morning after a ball or an evening party, and, provided her standard be correct, he *is* a gentleman. He can enter a room with perfect grace, talk sweet amusing nothings, and is quite up in everything which hand-books of etiquette so vainly try to teach. But "it's not the gay coat makes the gentleman;" "meat feeds, cloith cleads (cloth clothes), but manners make the man;" "ne'er show me the meat, but the man." A man may be well dressed and courtly too, and yet have nothing of the spirit of a gentleman. All well enough for him to dress well, if he can afford it, and any man deserves to be scouted who recklessly tramples on those conventional usages of society, which involve the sacrifice of no principle. But the true gentleman is one who endeavours to carry out in all his conduct that exhortation of the apostle, "Be courteous;" one who would scorn to do a mean and dishonourable thing; who would not needlessly cause you a moment's pain, much less wrong you; and who would readily sacrifice his own convenience to do you a service. His position in life may be lowly, and his garb homely, and his speech provincial, but he has the spirit of a gentleman notwithstanding—

"For a' that and a' that,
(His) toils obscure and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

It is scarcely fair to say so much about the gentleman without at least a word about the lady. Reader, what is your *beau ideal* of a lady? "A lady!" somebody perhaps replies, "Oh! I could paint a lady, with a beautiful countenance, an open

beaming eye, and a well-proportioned form, gliding along like a sylph, so easily and gracefully, that the very earth seems proud to have her tread upon it; her voice so sweet, that the song-birds hush their notes to listen to it; her manners gentle, refined, polished—the reverse of everything that is rude and hard. That's something like my idea of a lady!" Is it? Well, it is pretty clear you are a young man—we should say, a very young man; and we should be half inclined to think you have been giving us a portrait of somebody who is all that—to *you*. But we must have something else to come up to the idea of a lady. A good deal of what you have described may be wanting; and still there may be left—a lady. "Handsome is that handsome does;" "fine feathers" don't always "make fine birds." Give us one who is gentle and courteous, not in the drawing-room only, but everywhere else; who keeps her place, so that none will think of presuming on her kindness, yet who makes not only her equals, but her servants, feel that she does not forget they are human like herself, and possessed of feelings like her own; one who, besides, is prompt to discern and quick to relieve the wants of the needy and sorrowful; for the old Saxon word "leafden," from which our English word "lady" is derived, means, literally, a giver of bread. That is a lady. There may be neither beauty of countenance, nor grace of form, nor sweetness of voice, nor splendour of attire—still she is a lady. The English lady has long been the admiration of other lands, but never, we may venture to say, so much as since Florence Nightingale performed her noble work of love in the hospitals at Scutari.

"All that glistens is not gold;" "all is not gain that is got into the purse;" "the handsomest flower is not the sweetest;" "fine feathers make fine birds." These all teach the lesson that we are not to trust to appearances. That situation which is offered you, may be more remunerative than the one you leave; but there may be substantial inconveniences or disadvantages connected with it, which will more than counterbalance the gain. That's a very handsome flower, and you would like to pluck and wear it. Don't take for granted that, because it's "handsome," it will be "sweet." That's a fine bird; but see that there is something more than feathers. That beautiful face, that winning manner, that rich voice, those attractive accomplishments may be the sheen of genuine gold, but they may be only tinsel. Be sure it is gold. Look at it on all sides, and look, if you can, beneath the surface. You are going to get such a prize! Take care there is not something inseparable from it which will sadly detract from its value.

A gentleman saw almost daily passing his house a butcher's boy, riding on a capital horse. It was just such a horse as he thought he wanted, and he must have it. He went to the butcher, and bid him thirty, forty, and finally eighty guineas for his nag. At last the butcher consented, and the gentleman mounted his bargain. It would not stir an inch. He thought there must be some trickery about the matter, and said so. The butcher called his boy: "Here, boy, mount this horse!" The creature flew like an arrow. The gentleman mounted again, with the same result as before. "How is it?" he exclaimed, in despairing indig-

nation. "Oh!" said the butcher, "you must take the basket!" Many a man has bought his nag, and has not found out till after that he had to take the basket as well!

"Self praise is no commendation;" "he that praiseth himself, spattereth himself;" "it's stinking praise comes out o' ane's ain mouth." Sometimes the boaster may want to convince you that he is really a better man than you are. Often his boasting may be actually regarded as a compliment to those in whose hearing he utters his own praises; for all he wants is their admiration, and he virtually says that he prizes it greatly; but somehow or other it is a compliment which very few people either see or appreciate. There is a general conspiracy against the offender, and very often he is not allowed the credit he deserves. "Speech of a man's self," says Bacon, "ought to be seldom, and well chosen. I knew one who was wont to say in scorn, 'He must needs be a wise man, he speaks so much of himself.'" Solomon says, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

"Every man's censure is first moulded in his own nature." It is modified by his own views and feelings, and it is therefore an indication of what he is. Isaac Taylor says on this subject, very impressively: "As often as we cite another to our tribunal, the sentence we utter has a double import, and may be read off first as touching the party so cited, and in which application it may be an exquisite decision or quite otherwise; but when regarded in its reflex sense, no such judgment can be fallacious; and it carries with it a fearful certainty, just as it was deliberately formed, and has received the full consent of the mind and heart. The metallic reflector which the astronomer presents to the celestial field may image the bright objects before it truly or falsely, clearly or dimly: but infallibly it gives notice of any flaw that mars its own surface, and tells of its own variations from an exact parabolic figure."

There is a practice of which that reminds us, and which is described by a phrase which has now become proverbial—"Fishing for compliments." We should hardly believe that man who told us that he did not care a straw for anybody's praise or blame. We would set it down at once, either that he was telling a falsehood, or that he was sadly ignorant of himself. It is a satisfactory thing to know that what we have done is approved by those whose good opinion is worth having; and there are certain cases in which, without any lowering or impropriety the opinion of a kind and judicious friend may be sought in plain terms. But anything which may be construed into "fishing for compliments" is always derogatory. It takes sometimes the guise of humility, and confesses defects, the very opposite of those excellencies whose commendation is sought; or regrets that the effort just made was so very poor and unsuccessful—the meaning being, that the party to whom the humble acknowledgment is made, is to say that it far exceeded all expectation; or some absolutely overpowering compliment is paid to another, on the principle expressed by a phrase one often hears, and which is also proverbial: "Tickle me, Toby, and I'll tickle you." Some good, though not over wise or discriminating

people, who really admire and love those whom they praise, give them so much commendation, that they become like that "full soul" of which Solomon speaks, and which loathes even "a honey comb;" though, generally speaking, a good deal of praise can be swallowed before reaching that point of repletion. Others, more acute, but less honest, give the praise because it is asked, and then laugh at those to whom they give it. "It is not good," says Solomon, "to eat much honey; so for men to search out their own glory is not good."

There are many proverbs about company, the lessons of which are so obvious that they need no illustration. "He that lies down with dogs rises with fleas;" "Tell me your company, and I will tell you what you are;" "Keep good men company, and you shall be of the number;" "Keep not ill men company, lest you increase the number." How like, yet how superior, the aphorisms of inspired wisdom: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed;" "One sinner destroyeth much good;" "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

"Punishment is lame, but it comes." There is a similar sentiment expressed by a quaint Scotch proverb: "He that sups wi' the deil should hae a lang spoon." They are but echoes of what the Bible says: "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" "Be sure your sin will find you out."

"Half the world knows not how the other half lies" or "lives;" and, as a general rule, either half of the world would be very sorry that the other *should* know how it lives. Struggling poverty would many a time fain cast a veil over its shifts for subsistence, its toils, its overcrowdings, and its griefs; and wealth would just as little like to have exposed its splendid misery. And yet this proverb involves not a little blame. Each half of the world ought to know much more of the other, but especially the richer and more educated and religious part of the community, of the poor, the ignorant, and the bad. How often has the palace been altogether unmindful of the fact, that within a stone's-throw of its culture and its magnificence were haunts of squalid vice and wretchedness! How often has beauty adorned itself for some scene of glittering splendour, without a single thought of "the fingers weary and worn," and the "aching eyes and dim" by which its graceful attire had been fashioned! How often have Christian people sat in their comfortable pews, and listened to the glorious gospel, and offered thanks to God for their exalted privileges, with little thought of the sinners at their very doors! But of late, Christian philanthropy has aroused itself to a wider and more practical sympathy, turning aside and looking, not like the Levite or the priest, but, like the good Samaritan, pouring into the wounds of our sin-stricken humanity the oil and wine of a loving sympathy and aid; and ragged schools, and city missions, and reformatories, and temperance societies, and a host of kindred institutions are at work, seeking, with all their might, to restore the fallen and the lost. Who would not help forward such endeavours? and who would not pray for their success?

"Life is half spent before we know what it is." How many, looking back from mid-life, have had to re-echo and expand the utterance of the great sage of antiquity, who exclaimed, "I have lost a day!" and confess, "I have lost my whole life till now." We sometimes say, "It is a solemn thing to die;" and so it is; but it is a not less solemn thing to *live*; for life is the seed-plot of eternity, the hour of probation, the time in which we may win for ourselves an everlasting crown, and be the means of conferring on immortals like ourselves the most exalted blessings. That young man is most truly wise who, instead of wasting his earlier years on trifling or sinful pleasures, looks at once on life in its true grandeur and seriousness, resolved to "know what it is" whilst yet he has the greater portion of it before him, and then to devote it to the high and noble ends for which it was given, and to spend it all in the service of God. Such a life will be a life of true enjoyment, though enjoyment be not the end it mainly contemplates; and it will be the theme of grateful and approving remembrance when we look back on it from the serious hour of death, and from the vantage-ground of heaven. It can never be too soon to begin such a life as that.

A SAILOR BOY ARTIST.

ABOUT the year 1811-12, there might have been seen on board of one of the old sloops by which the town of Whitby in Yorkshire was supplied with coals, a diminutive little fellow, about eight years of age, black as a sweep, but lively and active, employed, with a companion of the same age but at least a head taller, in holding open the mouths of the coal-sacks while they were filled by the porters. If any one had inquired the history of the toiling mannikin, the reply would have been that he was the son of a poor seaman before the mast, who had a hard struggle of it to maintain his family—that the urchin had already received all the education he was ever likely to get, and that the sum total of that amounted to no more than such a child could pick up by attending in alternate weeks at a day-school at the cost of a weekly penny—that advantage being shared in turns by an elder brother, because the mother was too poor to pay twopence a week for learning for her two sons. The boy, whose industry now contributed to the support of the household, received two shillings a week and the sweepings of the coal-dust from off the deck in return for his labour—and you may picture him staggering home on the Saturday night with his sack of dust-coal on his back and his two shillings in his pocket to his mother's house, where she washed his black face for him and gave him a kiss and a supper before she put him to bed. Such a forlorn scion of such a humble family seemed at that date a very unlikely subject to figure in any way, and the least likely of all to win by his genius and talent the admiration of men of cultivated taste and judgment, the patronage of royalty, and a lasting and well-deserved reputation. And yet the little fellow won them all by his own pertinacious industry, and that too in the course of a short life, terminated at the early age of thirty-seven.

It was in the drudging occupation above de-

scribed that George Chambers, the exquisite painter of marine subjects, began his battle with circumstances. At ten years of age we find him on board a humber-keel, a vessel so small as to be fully manned with two persons, and containing no sleeping berth for the boy, and under the command of his uncle, who had taken him off his mother's hands to relieve her from the burden of his support. In this situation he endured every hardship to which the friendless sea-boy is liable. Scantily fed and miserably clad, tasked beyond his strength, and exposed to long watchings by night and day; tormented above all by the tyranny of his dissolute relative, he led for two years a life of such wretchedness as few children could have survived, who had not, like him, been familiar with hardship from their infancy.

Happily he escaped from this tyranny, though not before his constitution was seriously injured, and at twelve years of age was apprenticed to the captain of a brig. It was now that his genius for painting began to develop itself in a manner which appears to have been entirely spontaneous. With no incentives to emulation around him, and with nothing in the shape of art of the rudest kind to arouse the imitative faculty, he began to draw ships, boats, and headlands, and to petition for pence, when there was a chance of getting them, to buy paper, pencils, and cheap paints. Every moment of the short leisure which a sailor's life affords he devoted to these purposes, and followed them with a zest that became a passion; and whenever he set foot on shore he ran immediately in search of the nearest picture that was to be seen, there to drink in the knowledge for which he thirsted. His short stature made him the butt of the crew, who would have knocked him about at their pleasure; but George could climb like a cat, and rarely suffered himself to be caught by his quarrelsome shipmates. Being so light and small, he was unfitted for the heavy work, and was much employed in painting the stores and hull of the vessel, and in this he manifested such taste and skill as astonished his captain and elicited the encomiums of all visitors to the brig. It did not benefit the poor lad, however, who on one occasion, when all his clothes had been stolen by a runaway seaman, was allowed by the commander to lie through the whole of a severe winter without bed or bedding. In consequence of this neglect Chambers contracted a severe fever, from which he but slowly recovered, and was subject to painful cramps and rheumatism during the remainder of his life.

The future artist passed five years on board the brig. All this time he must have made admirable use of his leisure, for at seventeen he made drawings with the rude materials at his command, which drew the attention of persons well qualified to judge, and led to their interfering with the view of releasing the artist from the bondage of his indentures, and leaving him free to pursue his studies. Not without much opposition on the part of the captain, the indentures were finally cancelled in London; and Chambers, working his way back to Whitby on board a trader, there apprenticed himself to a house and ship painter for three years, at a wage of about six shillings per week. He had now what was to him abundant leisure and unlimited materials at his command. He cared

for no other recreation, he sought no other amusement than his art; he made careful drawings of everything that took his fancy; he would sit up all night to paint tubs and pails to earn an extra shilling, and would spend the shilling in the morning in a lesson from an humble artist in the town. This was the only instruction in painting he ever received; and it is noteworthy that the artist who gave it soon acknowledged his superiority and sought instruction from his pupil.

Chambers's first finished productions were small oil paintings of vessels at sea; they were marked by a seaman's knowledge of his craft rather than by artistic power, but every one of them was better than its predecessor, and he was fast advancing in the road to excellence. Wishing to paint a view of his native town, he put off one wintry day in an old coble, with two companions, and made his sketch in the roadstead. He had hardly finished when a storm arose; the old boat was driven about at the mercy of the waves, and nearly filled with water. All chance of escape seemed hopeless, the boat, completely waterlogged, drifting towards the rocks, when the wind providentially changing, they were encouraged to renew their efforts, and by desperate exertions at length reached the harbour in a sinking state. Chambers had pulled so hard that the blood streamed from his hands, which festered from their wounds and laid him up for five weeks. But this disaster had a bright side: the surgeon employed to dress his wounds was a man of taste; struck with the fine talent of his patient, he purchased some of his little pictures, and promised him letters of introduction to friends in London, whither Chambers intended to proceed at the expiration of his apprenticeship. But just as his term ended his mother died, and thus the few pounds saved for his start in life had to be devoted to the discharge of her funeral expenses.

There was now no longer any tie to bind the young artist to Whitby, and, getting an engagement in a vessel, he worked his passage as a common seaman up to London, receiving two pounds as wages, that sum forming the greater part of his capital on arriving at the metropolis. Here he hired a bed-room in the house of a married sister as poor as himself, and commenced that struggle with poverty which so many have to go through who aim at distinction through the medium of their own exertions. He found it terribly discouraging work, and for some time it seemed that he would be driven back to the sea for a livelihood, to such straits was he driven. But he worked on in the face of all obstacles, and at length Providence raised him up a friend, in the person of Mr. Crawford, an ex-ship surgeon and an innkeeper—a man of large heart and generous hand, though more than ordinarily rough and unceremonious. For him Chambers painted his first picture on canvas, a view of the town of Whitby from the sea, which excited quite a sensation among the coasting captains who put up at Crawford's house, and brought the artist many commissions for new pictures. In order that he might execute these orders in a worthy manner, Crawford procured him a passage in a coasting vessel, in which he sailed as a guest, sketching as he went the coast-scenes, harbours and headlands of nearly the whole of the southern and eastern shores of the island. This voyage

was of immense service to the future painter, who from this time gave up copying from the works of others, in confident reliance on his own resources.

While executing these orders, which, being given by sea-captains, were generally for portraits of their own vessels, and but indifferently remunerated, Chambers felt himself fitted for work of a superior class. His friend, who participated this feeling, introduced him to the proprietor of the Coliseum, in which the grand panorama of London was then in course of painting. Mr. Horner directed him to paint a specimen picture from the roof of some lofty house, and bring it there as a sample of his work. On the following day, the young artist painted a picture from the top of Crawford's house, of the crowded district of Thames bank, with Shadwell church in the distance. Mr. Horner, when it was produced, could scarcely believe that so admirable a work had been done in so short a time. The sailor-boy—for little Chambers never grew out of that designation—was slung up forthwith, and, being supplied with the necessary sketches, set to work among the chimney-pots, upon a part of the canvas which a previous artist had spoiled. His diminutive appearance excited some mirth among the other artists engaged; but he worked away with a rapidity and effect that changed their note, especially when Mr. Horner, the proprietor, coming in to see his progress in the evening, called out, "A word with you, young sailor. I have only to tell you that you have done, in a most masterly manner, more work in a day than a fine German artist, who came here with a livery servant, spoiled in a week." The result was, that, owing to Chambers's rapidity and truth of colouring, the other artists were discharged, and he remained as sole assistant to Mr. Parris, who had the direction and the responsibility of the whole. A considerable portion of that magnificent panorama, so well known to Londoners, is therefore the work of the Whitby sailor-boy; it was he that painted the river, besides whole masses of the distant grey roofs, the most charming features of the whole. Unhappily for Chambers, however, Mr. Horner's affairs fell into confusion, and the wages thus meritoriously earned were in great part lost.

But the sailor-boy artist was now getting into notice, and his pictures began to be sought after. About this time he married, and took apartments in Alfred-street, Bedford-square, where aristocratic patrons began to gather around him. Lord Mark Kerr became enthusiastic in his behalf: he not only employed him constantly, but recommended him to others, and finally mentioned him to King William the Fourth, who expressed a wish to see some of his productions. Chambers sent, with other pictures, a view of the opening of London Bridge by the king in person, which he had painted in the hope that some of the city dignitaries would buy it. The king bought that picture for fifty guineas, and desired that the artist should attend upon him at Windsor, with a portfolio of sketches for the inspection of the queen, who wished to select some subjects to be painted.

It is not easy to imagine the perturbation of the young man who, not so many years ago, had been cad to a gang of coal-heavers, upon receiving a summons to attend personally upon his sove-

reign. But he wrote to say he would come, and with the modest simplicity that marked his character he went, portfolio in hand. He was terribly cowed and cast down by the grandeur and magnificence of the pages in waiting; but Sir Herbert Taylor, the king's private secretary, received him with kindness; and the king banished all his fears at once, and set him at his ease, by the homely frankness of his conversation and demeanour. The queen was equally affable and kind, and free from that hauteur which renders people uncomfortable. She made choice of two subjects, and Chambers, promising to do his best to please, left the castle highly delighted with his reception at court.

But the sailor-boy paid dearly for this high honour. There was no inside-place vacant in the coach from Windsor, and, riding all the way home in a deluging rain, he caught a chill which brought on his old rheumatisms, and laid him up for six months. He was attended by Dr. Roupell, who ever afterwards remained one of his firmest friends. His long illness separated him from most of his patrons; but as soon as he recovered he set about the royal pictures, which were highly approved and liberally paid for by the queen.

The name of Chambers was now one of note. He became a regular contributor to the London exhibitions of art, and wherever his pictures were hung they were surrounded by a circle of admirers, and were invariably marked with the ticket "sold," being in fact generally sold before they were painted.

Nothing was now wanting to his prosperity and lasting reputation but health to labour, as he would have chosen to labour, at his beloved art. This, alas! was denied him. As a child, his constitution had suffered much from poverty and hardship—as a lad, it had been irretrievably ruined by neglect, exposure, and the oppressive exactions of his hard masters. His worst symptoms returned too soon, and his medical man despatched him to his native town to try the effect of change of air. Here he took less care of himself than he should have done, and, continually at work with his sketch-book, laboured as hard as he would have done at home in his studio.

On returning to London, he resumed his profession with distinguished success, and in the course of the few following years painted most of these admirable pictures of marine subjects which have raised his reputation to a level, at least, with that of any English artist then living, in the same walk. That these fine works are all too few, and now rarely to be met with, is owing to the melancholy fact that, from the fatal visit to Windsor to the day of his death, so much of the artist's time was occupied in running about in search of health, which unhappily he was not destined to regain. His industry was unrivalled: when able to work he breakfasted early and painted the whole day, and while the canvass glowed under his hand, would listen to no calls to the dinner-table. He received visitors while at work, and was in the habit of spending his evenings in a club of brother artists, men of the highest mark in the profession, who met alternately at each other's houses to draw and talk, leaving their productions as a contribution to the portfolio of the host for the night.

He made no secret of his mode of painting, or of anything he knew, and readily communicated information to younger artists, and constantly assisted them, not only by his advice, but by every means in his power.

In the course of his rambles after health, Chambers not only visited nearly every part of the coast, but made two trips to Holland, and at each of these he took pupils with him, by whom his expenses were covered. His rapidity of hand enabled him to profit largely by these excursions, and several noble pictures of Dutch scenery were the result. Among others he painted a fine view of Rotterdam, and one still more excellent of Delft-Haven. It must have been about the year 1836 that he painted the grand gallery picture of the Bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth, which is now in Greenwich Hospital, and for which he received two hundred guineas.

Towards the close of his short career, crippled and enfeebled as his energies were by failing health, troubles and anxieties began to gather around him. But he struggled manfully and honourably with impending misfortune; and though he felt that his powers were no longer what they were—that his hand was losing its cunning in the confinement of a sick-room—he never lost heart nor hope, but looked forward cheerfully to regaining his health—to getting once more face to face with Nature, and re-asserting his powers as an artist. He went to Ramsgate to be near the sea, in the double search after health and new ideas, but in vain; he grew weaker daily; his voice became faint, hoarse, and husky, and his arm was too weak to support the palette. On his return to town the impress of death was on his countenance, and his friends were shocked at his appearance.

Chambers resorted once more to his old friend and benefactor, Crawford. Unable to work, and with a young family to provide for, apprehensions of poverty overcame him. With tears in his eyes he said, "My ill-health will bring me and my children to a garret." "Make your mind easy," was the generous reply; "that shall not be the case; I will take care of that." Crawford did more: Chambers being advised to try the air of Madeira, his friend supplied means for the voyage, procured him a passage out in the "Dart," and furnished him with letters of recommendation. He had a prosperous passage, and notwithstanding his feeble health, occupied his time whenever he was able in sketching on deck, and making water-colour drawings in his cabin. At Madeira, he also took sketches with the intention of painting a large picture, and this was the last subject on which he ever employed his pencil. He had been counselled to spend some considerable time in the island; but he had not been there a week ere the home-sickness came upon him; he yearned for the familiar home faces like a child banished from its parents, and no consideration could induce him to prolong his exile. He packed up his luggage, and returned in the same vessel in which he went out, after a stay of only ten days.

In the autumn of the same year (1840), not having touched a pencil since the preceding March, he went down to Brighton, still cherishing a hope that the sea air would revive his exhausted frame.

His kind physician, Dr. Roupell, seems to have shared these hopes, and prescribed a course of diet and medicine which he trusted would be beneficial. At Brighton, too weak to attempt a sketch, he would throw himself on the beach and contemplate the scenes so familiar to him, expressing his rapture at the effects of the changeful atmosphere upon the sky and waters.

He returned from Brighton but to die. He seems never to have imagined that his end was near. His mental powers and fine perceptive faculties probably remained entire to the last, and their activity may have banished the apprehension of the death that was so near. On the morning of the 29th of October, having risen from his bed from mere restlessness, he said, as he sat in his easy chair, "I feel faint," and so died, without a struggle or a pang, like one falling asleep.

The career of George Chambers, the Whitby sailor-boy, presents, perhaps, the most remarkable instance on record of the force of sheer genius, unassisted by education or circumstance, in surmounting the obstacles to which men of average character invariably succumb. To his dying day Chambers could scarcely spell the common words of his own language, so defective was his education; yet his manners were naturally polite and courteous, and his address and bearing those of a gentleman. He was no great reader of books, but he read the page of Nature, and derived invaluable lessons from her teaching. It is observable that, deriving all his knowledge from such a source, his magic power with the pencil failed him whenever he was debarred from having recourse to the same fountain. He felt this himself, and his great grief in sickness was that he could no longer "get out to Nature" (it is his own expression), to grasp the wealth she offered him. He would trust his memory or invention for nothing, if it could be avoided; even a stone, a post, or a floating buoy or water-weed—nay, an old plank—he would jot down in his sketch-book for further use, rather than paint even such a trifle from memory. As for the sky, he committed all its phenomena to paper at every opportunity. He never observed a fine disposition of the clouds, but he would call for his colours, and wash them in before the wind had spoiled their contour or dissipated their beautiful forms. His sketching-books were filled with bits of skies extemporised in this way; and the wondrous advantage derived from such a practice is visible in the skies of his pictures.

In many minor technicalities, and in the tricks of the studio, Chambers was deficient, and that is one reason why his pictures have so much of the feeling of nature. Though painted with extraordinary boldness and consummate mastery of material, they do not strike us as specimens of superior workmanship merely: one is apt to forget the painter while looking at them, and to be lost in the subject and the scene. There is no mannerism about them to remind you who was the artist; while every touch is full of truth and vigour, or tenderness.

Unfortunately for Chambers's reputation, too many of his early productions, bearing his signature, are extant. It is unfair to judge him by these, which were painted in the grasp of poverty to purchase bread. His finer works, produced

during the last six years of his life, alone show what he was. One of them, by no means the best of its class, is No. 607 in the Manchester Exhibition of Modern Art, and others are in the possession of the nobility and aristocracy of the land. It is by these that he should be judged, not by the efforts of his untaught and inexperienced youth.

Chambers's appears a hard fate. He fought the difficult battle with adversity under every disadvantage, and he won the victory, but lost the prize: he climbed the hill Difficultly with unwearyed labour and courage, but never reached the golden plains on the other side. Such is human success. A poor thing when regarded in itself, and valuable only when it is made subservient to the higher and eternal interests of man's nature.

FABLES FOR THE YOUNG.

IN VERSE.

THE COAT AND THE PILLOW.

It chanced that the coat of a very fine fellow
Had been thrown on the bed, and lay close to a pillow,
With that ease which high company gives, for the coat
Had been much in the world and in circles of note.
"Friend pillow," says he, "why that look of distress?
By your rumpled condition, you've slept ill, I guess;
Or, perhaps, that your master is gone, you are sorry,
He's a very fine fellow; if so, I feel for ye.
I'm always delighted to go where he goes,
And mix in the mirth which around him he throws,
Gay, wealthy, and witty, and wanton, and young,
Made for conquests his form—for persuasion his tongue,
On whom Nature her presence so lavishly showers,
What mortal so bless'd as this master of ours?
'Twould delight you to see with what graceful composure
He throws down his guineas and stakes an inclosure.
'Tother night 'twas at whist that Sir Somebody blunder'd,
And lost him, I think, 'twasn't less than a hundred;—
To see him, my friend, you'd conclude he had won;
Such an easy, good-temper'd, sweet smile he put on;
What with dancing and singing, and laughing and drinking,
You'd wonder what time he had left him for thinking!
If he wins, if he loses, he's glad and still glad—
I do not believe he knows how to be sad.
With such mental control, and a heart so at ease,
Sure never was found a man form'd so to please."
"And now," says the pillow, "it's my turn to speak;
If I let you alone, you'll go on for a week.
Since you say that with you he's as light as a feather,
Pray keep him, or come to bed always together;
For the moment you're off, such a trade then commences,
You'd think he was fairly bereft of his senses;
Such complaining, such sorrow, repentance and hate,
Such raving at fortune, such railing at fate!
That, taking in bedlam, there is not in town
A pillow whose state I'd not change with my own.
The night that Sir Somebody lost him a hundred,
As soon as he laid himself down, how he thunder'd!
I never was in such a fright in my life—
He could not worse treat me if I were his wife.
He thinks, I believe, he can't treat me too rough;
I'm sometimes too high, sometimes not high enough;
Then such knocking, and thumping, and squeezing, but still
I can't give content, do whatever I will.
To complete my misfortune, sometimes in a sally,
He throws me as hard as he can at his valet,
Who ventures to give him his scurvy advice,
To have nothing to do with those villainous dice.
If this is the way with your very fine fellows,
'Twere better be any thing else than their pillows."

THOMAS LATE W. ROBERTS, ESQ.

Whoso despiseth little things, will never attain great things.

Varieties.

ROMAN WEALTH.—The wealth of the Romans was immense, as may be inferred from some historical incidents. When Caesar was killed on the Ides of March Anthony owed £320,000, which he paid before the Kalends of April out of the public money, and squandered (according to Adams) more than £5,600,000. Caesar himself, before he set out for Spain, was in debt to the extent of £2,018,000. Lentulus possessed £3,229,166. Claudius, a freedman, saved £2,500,000. Augustus obtained from the testamentary dispositions of his friends (some people will leave their fortunes to their sovereigns) no less than £32,291,686 sterling. Tiberius left at his death the enormous sum of £21,796,875, which Caligula is said to have squandered in a single year. Vespasian estimated at his accession that the money which the maintenance of the Commonwealth required was £322,916,000. Up to the time of Augustus, the wealth of the world appeared to flow into the treasuries of Rome, when the production of gold from the Roman mines in Illyria and Spain suddenly ceased, and for a long period the world received no new accession of metallic wealth. Jacob, in his "History of the Precious Metals," has computed the quantity of gold and silver in the Roman Empire for several years, and shows the rate of diminution to which the enormous wealth of the Augustan period was subject. The highest amounts are as follows:—

| A.D. | Amount. |
|---------------|--------------|
| 14 | £358,000,000 |
| 50 | 322,200,000 |
| 123 | 259,182,000 |
| 194 | 209,937,420 |
| 266 | 163,749,304 |
| 410 | 107,435,924 |

The decline had reached, in the year 806, to the sum of £23,674,256.

THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE ATLANTIC.—The "Mer de Sargasso," as the Spanish navigators termed the central portion of the Atlantic stretching westwards from the Canaries and Cape Verd Islands—a surface fifteen times greater than that of Great Britain—may be described as a vast stagnant pool, receiving the drift seaweed, which the surrounding currents fling into it, and generating on its calm surface what has been well called "an oceanic meadow" of seaweed, the *Fucus natans* of botanists. It is in this tract of sea that we find such wonderful species of fuci as the *Macrocystis pyrtifera*—having stems from 1000 to 1500 feet in length, and but a finger's size in thickness, branching upwards into filaments like packthread. The vast domain of marine vegetable life is the receptacle, as indeed are the waters of the ocean generally, of an equal profusion of animal existence—from the minute luminiferous organisms, which, to borrow Humboldt's phrase, "convert every wave into a crest of light," to those larger forms of life, many of which derive nutriment from the waters alone, thus richly impregnated with living animal matter. Reason and imagination are equally confounded by the effort to conceive those hosts of individual existences—*cette richesse effrayante*, as Cuvier terms it—generated or annihilated at every passing instant of time. No scheme of numbers can reach them, even by approximation; and science is forced to submit its deductions to the general law that all the materials of organic life are in a state of unceasing change, displacement and replacement under new forms and altered functions, for purposes which we must believe to be wisely designed, but which transcend all human intelligence.—*Edinburgh Review*.

INSTINCT OF THE PIGEON.—Sir John Ross, the arctic voyager, despatched a young pair of pigeons, on the 6th or 7th of October, 1850, from Assistance Bay, a little to the west of Wellington Sound, and on the 18th of October a pigeon made its appearance at the dovecot in Ayrshire, from whence Sir John had the two pairs of pigeons which he took out. The distance direct between the two places is about 2000 miles. The dovecot was under repair at this time, and the pigeons belonging to it had been removed, but the servants of the house were struck with the appearance and motions of this stranger. After a short

stay, it went to the pigeon-house of a neighbouring proprietor, where it was caught, and sent back to the lady who originally owned it. She at once recognised it as one of those which she had given to Sir John Ross; but, to put the matter to the test, it was carried into the pigeon-house, when, out of the many niches, it directly went to the one in which it had been hatched. No doubt remained in the mind of the lady of the identity of the bird. By what extraordinary power did this interesting bird find its way, and by what route did it come?—*Extract from Preface to "Yarrell's History of British Birds," Third Edition.*

ULTIMA THULE.—"Ultima Thule" is the name given in early history to the northernmost part of the habitable world; hence the Latin phrase *Ultima Thule*, the utmost stretch or boundary. Mr. Hogg, in a paper read to the Royal Society of Literature, in 1863, stated that it had been a common opinion that the Ultima Thule of the Romans was Iceland, but that he considered this rested upon no good authority. On the contrary, he believed that the Feroe Islands represent their Ultima Thule, it not being probable that, if the Romans had reached Iceland, they would have omitted discovering Greenland and America. Nothing certain is known of Iceland till the ninth century, though it has been imagined that the English and Irish were acquainted with its existence, as the Venerable Bede is said to have described the island pretty accurately. The Icelandic chronicle commences with the landing of the Norwegians, and states that a pirate of the name of Naddodr was driven by a storm upon Iceland in A.D. 891.—*Curiosities of Literature.*

MATERIAL FOR PAPER.—The use of the hop plant in the manufacture of paper is now proposed. Immediately after being cut, the stalk or vine is tied up in bundles, if possible the whole length of the plant, and these bundles are immersed in water pits similar to those employed in operating on flax and hemp, or in a running stream, and are kept there until a slight fermentation ensues sufficiently to partially detach the fibre, the pithy and woody portions of the stalk. The separation may be effected by hand, or by passing the stalk between rollers with or without teeth, the woody or pithy matter being picked out or washed out afterwards. After separation the fibre may be again steamed and rolled if required to be very fine; but care is necessary to keep the fibre wet until it is cleaned from gummy and resinous matters by repeated steaming and washing. The fibre will now be in the condition of half stuff, and fit, after further bleaching, for the manufacture of paper, pasteboard, etc.

AVERAGE DURATION OF HUMAN LIFE.—Professor Buchanan, in a recent lecture before the Mechanics' Institute at Cincinnati, said that, in a latter part of the sixteenth century, one half of all who were born died under five years of age; the average longevity of the whole population was but eighteen years. In the seventeenth century, one half the population died under twelve years of age. But in the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, one half of the population lived over twenty-seven years. In the latter forty years, one half exceeded thirty-four years of age. At the beginning of the present century, one half exceeded forty years; and from 1838 to 1845, one half exceeded forty-three. The average longevity at these successive periods has been increased from eighteen years, in the sixteenth century, up to 43.7 by the last reports.

NECESSITY OF CONTINUED MENTAL INDUSTRY.—It is no more possible for an idle man to keep together a stock of knowledge than it is possible to keep together a stock of ice exposed to the meridian. Every day destroys a fact, a relation, or an influence; and the only method of preserving the bulk and value of the pile is by constantly adding to it.

A PLEASANT manner renders insignificant words agreeable, and lightens the weight of advice.

BEING our own masters, sometimes means that we are to be the slave of our own follies, caprices, and passions.